

The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the Youth Leadership Program. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to provide two or more separate three- to four-week group exchanges in the United States for teenage and adult participants. Activities will focus on civic education, community service, and youth leadership development and will prepare participants to complete follow-on projects in their home communities. U.S. Embassies in the participating countries will recruit, screen, and select the participants. The successful applicant will provide flexible programming and work

with ECA and U.S. Embassies as they identify the participating countries in response to emerging circumstances requiring U.S. engagement. ECA intends to award up to two cooperative agreements for this program.

## **I. Funding Opportunity Description:**

### **Authority:**

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

### **Overview:**

The Youth Leadership Program provides three- to four-week exchanges in the United States for high school youth ages 15-18 and adult educators from countries identified as Department priorities. Exchange activities will focus on civic education, community service, and youth leadership development. Secondary themes on issues of global relevance may be added. Applicants must indicate their capacity to program an exchange at varying points during the award period. Participants will engage in a variety of activities such as workshops on leadership and service, community site visits related to the program themes and subthemes, interactive training and discussion groups, presentations, visits to high schools, local cultural activities, homestays, and other activities designed to achieve the program's stated goals.

Multiple opportunities for participants to interact meaningfully with their American peers must be included. Follow-on activities with the participants are an integral part of the program, and the exchange activities should prepare them to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired by planning service projects in their home communities.

The goals of the program are to:

- 1) Promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries;
- 2) Prepare youth leaders to become responsible citizens and contributing members of their communities; and
- 3) Foster relationships among youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups.

The objectives of the program are for participants to:

- 1) Demonstrate a better understanding of the elements of a participatory democracy as practiced in the United States;
- 2) Demonstrate improved critical thinking and leadership skills; and
- 3) Demonstrate skills in developing project ideas and planning a course of action to bring the projects to fruition.

The primary themes of the program are:

- 1) Civic education (citizen participation, grassroots democracy and rule of law);
- 2) Community service; and
- 3) Youth leadership development.

For each project, applicant organizations must focus on these primary themes. Secondary themes such as business and entrepreneurship, the environment, public health, or other

topics of global relevance may be used to illustrate the more abstract concepts of the primary themes. For example, the secondary theme of the environment can be used to examine how a group of teenagers with an idea can start a recycling campaign in their community. These themes may vary in response to Department priorities connected with the countries that participate. Applicants may state proposed secondary themes in the proposal, but will select specific secondary themes in consultation with the relevant U.S. Embassy/ies and ECA.

Using these goals, objectives, and themes, applicant organizations should identify their own specific and measurable outputs and outcomes based on the project specifications provided in this solicitation. Proposals should indicate how recipients will achieve the short-term program objectives, and how these objectives will contribute to the achievement of the stated long-term goals.

**Project Outline:**

The amount of funding available is approximately \$650,000. ECA anticipates awarding up to two cooperative agreements for the management of this Youth Leadership Program, for approximately \$325,000 each. Applicants should estimate funding of approximately \$8,000 to \$8,500 per participant. The program in

total will involve hosting approximately 70-85 high school students and educators (approximately 35-43 participants per award) for three- to four-week exchanges in the United States in 2013 and perhaps 2014. They will travel in several delegations, each delegation ranging from 14 to 25 participants. A delegation may include participants from a single country or from multiple countries, to be determined in consultation with Department stakeholders as emerging events and opportunities dictate. The successful applicant will demonstrate flexibility regarding exchange dates, delegation sizes, and country combinations. Applicants should indicate their ability to program additional participants or delegations should additional funding become available.

Applicants must be creative and flexible in proposing arrangements that will meet ECA program goals. The awardee must be able to carry out the exchange at any point in the year. More exchange participants may be included, should funding allow. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

**Guidelines:**

The cooperative agreement will begin on or about September 1, 2012. The award period will be 18 to 24 months in duration, as appropriate for the applicant's program design. Planning and preparation will start in 2012, and the exchanges will take place primarily in calendar year 2013 and perhaps into 2014. Applicants may propose the possible timing of the exchanges in their proposals though exact dates are subject to change through the mutual agreement of the Department of State and the award recipient.

**Organizational Capacity:**

Applicant organizations must demonstrate their capacity for conducting international youth exchanges, providing projects that address the goals, objectives, and themes outlined in this document, and providing age-appropriate programming for youth.

The successful applicant will demonstrate flexibility regarding exchange dates, delegation sizes, and country combinations. Applicants must describe their ability to staff and monitor exchanges throughout the grant period, as exchange dates will be arranged in consultation with the appropriate U.S. Embassies and ECA.

**U.S. Embassy Involvement:**

U.S. Embassies in the participating countries will recruit, screen, and select the participants; provide pre-departure briefings; facilitate visas; and collaborate with the U.S. recipient organization in overseeing alumni follow-on projects. Once a cooperative agreement is awarded and the participating countries are identified, the recipient must consult regularly with the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassies in the partner countries to implement the exchanges. Participating countries may be identified throughout the award period.

**Participants:**

Since the U.S. Embassies in the participating countries will select the participants, the award recipient will not be involved in participant selection. The youth participants will be high school students aged 15 to 18 years old. The adult participants may be teachers, trainers, school administrators, and/or community leaders who work with youth. They will have the dual role of both exchange participant and chaperone. The ratio of youth to adult participants will be approximately 7:1. Participants will be proficient in the English language.

The award recipient will be responsible for the following, which should be described in detail in the proposal:



Orientations: Provide pre-departure materials and information about the U.S. program to help the U.S. Embassies, participants, and their families in preparation for the exchange. Also, provide orientations for those participating from the host communities, including host families.

Logistics: Manage all logistical arrangements, including international and domestic travel, ground transportation, accommodations, group meals, and disbursement of pocket money.

Exchange Activities: Design and plan three to four weeks of exchange activities that provide a creative and substantive program that develops both the youth and the adult participants' knowledge and skill base in civic education, community service, and youth leadership development. The exchange will take place in no more than two or three locations so that the participants have time to familiarize themselves with a community. The exchange will focus primarily on interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities that provide a substantive experience on the specified program themes. Some activities should be school and/or community-based, and the exchange will involve as much sustained interaction with American peers as possible (for both the youth and adult participants). Cultural, social, and recreational activities

will balance the schedule. Applicants may choose to include a visit to Washington, D.C. For some groups, it may be required, so applicants should indicate their ability to provide substantive programming in Washington.

Accommodations: Arrange home stays for the participants with properly screened and briefed American families for the majority of the exchange period. Criminal background checks (which must include a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry) must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years of age or older. Please see the POGI for more details on host family screening and placement.

Monitoring: Develop and implement a plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being while on the exchange and to create opportunities for participants to share potential issues and resolve them promptly. The award recipient will be required to provide proper staff supervision and facilitation to ensure that the teenagers and adult participants have safe and pedagogically rich programs. Staff, along with the adult participants, will assist the youth with cultural adjustments, provide societal context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed. For the safety and security of the

participants, applicants must comply with the monitoring and supervision requirements, as well as the host family screening requirements, outlined in the POGI.

Follow-on Activities: Plan and implement activities in the participants' home countries, in coordination with the U.S. Embassies, particularly by facilitating continued engagement among the participants, advising and supporting them in the implementation of community service projects, and offering opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values and skills imparted during the exchange. Exchange participants should return home from the exchange prepared to conduct projects that serve a need in their schools or communities. To amplify program impact, proposals should present creative and effective ways to address the project themes post-exchange, for both program participants and their peers.

Evaluation: Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the short- and medium-term impact of the project on the participants as well as on host and home communities.

**Please note:**

In a cooperative agreement, the Department of State is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond

routine grant monitoring. The Department's activities and responsibilities for the Youth Leadership Program are as follows:

- 1) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
- 2) Manage the recruitment and selection of the participants, provide pre-departure briefings, and oversee follow-on activities.
- 3) Issue DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
- 4) Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas posts.
- 5) Arrange meetings with Department of State officials in Washington, D.C., as appropriate, and the participating countries.
- 6) Approve all program materials, including publicity materials and the final calendar of exchange activities.
- 7) Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.

**Additional Information:**

Award recipients will retain the name "Youth Leadership Program" to identify their project. All materials, publicity, and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

The organization must inform the ECA Program Officer and participating U.S. Embassies of their progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and will be required to obtain approval of any significant program changes in advance of their implementation. Close collaboration with the U.S. Embassies and with ECA is expected at each project stage.

Proposals must demonstrate how the stated objectives will be met. The proposal narrative should provide detailed information on the major project activities, and applicants should explain and justify their programmatic choices. Projects must comply with J-1 visa regulations for the International Visitor and Government Visitor category. Please be sure to refer to the complete Solicitation Package - this RFGP, the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) - for further information.

**II. Award Information:**

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under Section I above.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY-2012

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$650,000

**Approximate Number of Awards:** Two

**Approximate Average Award:** \$325,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** September 1, 2012

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** 18-24 months after start date, to be specified by applicant based on project plan

**Additional Information:** Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew these cooperative agreements for two additional fiscal years, before openly competing them again.

**III.) Eligibility Information:**

**III.1. Eligible applicants:** Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

**III.2.** Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

**III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:**

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making multiple awards in amounts greater than to \$130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this

exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

- Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition.
- If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

#### **IV.) Application and Submission Information:**

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has



passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

#### **IV.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:**

An electronic application package may be obtained from grants.gov. Please see section IV.3f for further information.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify ECA/PE/C/PY/T and Program Officer Hannah Pierson-Compeau and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-12-59 on all other inquiries and correspondence.

#### **IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:**

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at

<http://exchanges.state.gov/grants/open2.html>, or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF - 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in the CCR until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in the CCR will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the

necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

**IV.3d.1 ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA**

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division  
U.S. Department of State  
ECA/EC/D/PS, SA-5, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
2200 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

#### IV.3d.2     **Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into your proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that

"in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

#### IV.3d.3. **Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include



indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured

as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

**Please note:** Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A - "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

**IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:**

Application Deadline Date: May 31, 2012

Reference Number: ECA/PE/C/PY-12-59

Methods of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

**PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov**

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov

website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 7AM - 9PM Eastern Time

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two

business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

**It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.**

Optional - IV.3f.1 You may also state here any limitations on the number of applications that an applicant may submit and make it clear whether the limitation is on the submitting organization, individual program director or both.

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

## **V. Application Review Information**

### **V.1. REVIEW PROCESS**

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package.

All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (cooperative agreements) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

#### **REVIEW CRITERIA**

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below.

**1. Quality of the program idea:** Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The proposed program should be creative and age-appropriate, respond to the design outlined in the solicitation, and demonstrate originality. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail. Proposals should also include a plan to support participants' community activities upon their return home.



**2. Program planning:** A detailed plan should clearly demonstrate how project objectives would be achieved through the program activities, adhering to the program overview and guidelines described above. The substance of workshops, seminars, presentations, school-based activities, and/or site visits should be described in detail.

**3. Support of diversity:** The proposal should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity in participant recruitment and selection and in program content. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate participants with physical disabilities.

**4. Institutional capacity and track record:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

**5. Program evaluation:** The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the program's success in meeting its goals, both as the activities unfold and after they have been completed. The

proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique, plus a description of a methodology to link outcomes to original project objectives. The award recipient will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded.

**6. Cost-effectiveness and cost sharing:** The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment.

## **VI.) Award Administration Information**

### **VI.1a. Award Notices:**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive an Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be

signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

.

#### VI.2 **Administrative and National Policy Requirements:**

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

*Mandatory:*

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period.

(Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The performance reports (PPR) must be submitted electronically to the Grants Office at [reportseca@state.gov](mailto:reportseca@state.gov) with a copy sent to the Program Officer. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/> .

Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Office and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

For questions about this announcement, contact: Hannah Pierson-Compeau, U.S. Department of State, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/T, SA-5, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 632-6079, [PiersonCompeauHM@state.gov](mailto:PiersonCompeauHM@state.gov).

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/PE/C/PY-12-59.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed,

Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

**VIII. Other Information:**

**Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.